

# **Religion&Tech Priest**

**2 June 2030**

# DESCRIPTION OF THE PRODUCT

This project is comprised of 4 elements. The main and overarching product is the Substack newsletter feed of our favorite priest, 'Religion&Tech'. The second newsletter contains the second element: a video with artificial audio of our priest giving the mass. The third newsletter, similarly, contains the third element: a new page of the Bible, containing the chapter finale written by AI. Lastly, each newsletter received some comments from the user testers, playing different roles and identifying oneself with some specific, stereotypical point of view. This is the last element.

## OBSERVATION

These four elements concur to create a reflective environment on the intersection between Artificial Intelligence and Religion. Being the liturgy still heavily reliant on out-of-context readings of the Bible, understanding becomes problematic for people who do not attend every Sunday Mass or cannot read the full Scriptures. In addition, after the readings, the priest begins his Homily, giving an interpretation of the mass and the readings. This often is extremely allegorical and abstract. In this issue, and many others, Artificial Intelligence can come to the rescue of Religion. AI can summarize what comes before the readings in the Scriptures, and it can do so without the allegorical or personal interpretations of the priests. The two explanations (the AI and the priest-made ones) can therefore complement each other and provide believers with the tools they need. The reflective environment is therefore intended to stimulate a reflection on the use of an AI-made summary of some passages of the Bible before the liturgy.

# **NARRATIVE**

Consequently, the project envisages an Italian priest opening a newsletter in 2030 (2050) to suggest his idea: to post, every Saturday, a summary of the events preceding the readings of the following Sunday mass. These summaries are to be made by AIs for efficiency reasons and to provide an unbiased and objective summary of the piece. Further, these are enacted on a video of a mass, where the priest's voice is substituted by an AI-generated voice reading the summary made by AI. With this goal in mind, the priest publishes a second newsletter. This time showing a real prototype of what he has in mind by that. He publishes a video of the priest of the Diocesi di Mantova, whose audio has been substituted with the neural voice created with <https://voicemaker.in/>. The words read by the neural voice are a summary of the beginning of the 24th chapter of Luke's Gospel that has been summarized by <https://quillbot.com/summarize>.

Moving to the third element, the priest, after months of activity in the newsletter, suggests his final vision. He envisages a new perspective for AI: the creation of new words of God. Using <https://deepai.org/machine-learning-model/text-generator>, the priest creates a new ending of the passage summarized in the second newsletter. The priest is now completely hyped about AI and cannot see its limits any longer. He believes that the new means of communication of God can only be through AI, which will be able to write Godly words as it is not tainted by human sin.

# **FORMAT**

To convey the full complexity of the project, an interplay of three formats has been chosen, presenting a newsletter, a video, and a

book page.

Starting from the newsletter, this was chosen as it allows full expression of the priest's idea, allowing users to provide answers to the presented idea. In particular, many, more progressive, priests are already adopting this communication method with their followers (such as The AX priest, The Hermeneutic of Continuity priest), as it allows to broadcast direct emails to the full list of followers subscribed to the church. Further, it allows using many different multimedia attachments, each of them concurring to making the content of the newsletters more attractive. In this specific case, the Substack newsletter feed was used, creating an account under the name Religion&Tech.

Secondly, most of the attention was put into the realization of the video. This epitomizes the final product of this project: the AI summary. This format was chosen against plain summarized text for two reasons: 1) it consisting of neural audio speaking artificial text creates a second layer of artificiality which brings forward the problem of how much AI can distance ourselves from reality; 2) it is a more accessible and consumer product than bare text. Being the purpose of the adoption of AI the popularization of the content of the mass, making the product accessible to as vast an audience as possible is crucial. In this sense, a video can be consumed by the illiterate and by people seeking a distraction from work/study.

Lastly, a mockup of a page of the Bible was produced. This was presented using colors typically associated with religious page formatting and a very calligraphic font. These elements should recall the authenticity of the AI text: the page should seem as it was taken from a page of the Bible. In parallel, the content should be conceived as it was intended by God.

As a last note, the reactions to the posts were left to user testers to obtain real, outside views on the idea, leaving out my personal bias as the AI leaves out the priest's bias. Surprisingly, most of the responses were rather positive.

# IMPLICATIONS

More explicitly, this project aims to raise some crucial questions about AI and Religion:

- Can AI help **popularize** the liturgy, extending its understanding to sporadic churchgoers?
- Is an AI summary more **unbiased** than a human one? Would this 'solve' the issue of interpretation?
- Can AI interact with the Sacred? Would this be profane?
- Will the vast use of AI distance us from **reality**? For example, in a future where we will read mostly texts produced by AIs, will we be further away from reality?
- Will we be able to **trust** a summary by an AI, especially if we cannot read the full text to double-check for ourselves?

The last post specifically aims to raise a final issue: that of the AI hype. AI is being used for the vastest aspects of our lives, but:

- Why do we think that it is **appropriate** to apply it to so many areas?
- Why are people so hyped by it that apply it with great trust even if they do **not understand** how and why it works?

The implications of this union are much more vast than those mentioned above, however, if we want to start understanding what is happening in the application of AI to so many disciplines, this is a good thought experiment for all.

# ANNEX 1: THE NEWSLETTER

## Welcome to the Newsletter



Religion&Tech

May 18    1    1      

Dear readers,

I opened this newsletter with a **purpose**. I see great promise in the comradeship of Technology and Religion. All of us have experienced how the vast and complex nature of the events described in the Bible can create hardship in understanding the readings during the mass. I was persuaded that technology could come to our rescue in the struggle to fully **comprehend** and **assimilate** the events preceding those narrated during the Sunday Mass, and help believers comprehend more exhaustively the words of God.

To this end, the purpose of this newsletter is to publish, every week, a short video of the **summary of the events** connected to the readings of the forthcoming Sunday Mass. When possible, explicating the connection between the different readings. It will suffice to watch the short video a few minutes ahead of the Mass to be able to comprehend deeper not only the words of God but also the interpretation suggested in the homily. The community to whom I address these newsletters is therefore not only composed of the most loyal believers but also those who, for whatever reason, unfortunately, cannot attend with constancy the Mass and show their devotion to our God weekly. I wish that many more believers could use this tool to get closer to the Scriptures, cutting out only a few minutes of their days, which I know are becoming more and more frenetic for many of us.

May this help us disseminate the word of God.

Many of you have probably heard of the new horizons reached by **Artificial Intelligence** (AI), of its spread from the sciences to the most daily components of our existence. Among these algorithms, one of the most sophisticated and innovative is that which can summarize in a few words concepts of even the biggest volumes of text.

This algorithm can be useful to summarize some sections of our Sacred Scriptures to provide a recap of the most complex and hidden topics and events therein. Allowing, in so doing, believers to shape **their own interpretations** of those events, without imposing our human interpretation and **bias** in the summary. Also, this will create a relationship between God and the believer that is more direct and pure, and developed with greater awareness than that shaped by the sole readings and homilies. It will let even the believers who do not have time to read the Sacred Scriptures in their entirety comprehend their true, unfiltered, meaning.

The greatness of this tool is that it is unearthly, it does not include human errors, it does not put someone between you and God. It makes you understand the Scriptures without a human (although certainly qualified) giving you a one-sided interpretation.

May this tool accompany us and improve the experience of each of us (whilst, of course, not becoming a substitution to the constancy of prayers and the attendance to the liturgy)!

May God be with us, AMEN

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# Artificial Intelligence for Easter Sunday



Religion&Tech

May 19



Dear readers,



As promised in my previous post, I will commence a new experience for our community with this newsletter. We are approaching the very special recurrence of the Easter Mass, what better and more crucial moment to provide our believers with greater context and a heightened tool for comprehension?

This Sunday, we will read the Gospel of Luke, in particular chapter 24, Jesus has Risen. Of this chapter, only the last sentences will be enunciated. In the video below, you will find the Artificial Intelligence (AI) summary of the events discussed at the beginning of the chapter. As this is rather self-contained, I decided to limit the summary to only this chapter. In the following weeks, I will extend it to more chapters and Gospels.



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As you will see, I will publish videos of different priests with synthetic audios generated by AI as I would like to send the message that this summary should prescind the singularity of one priest, creating a community of influential and trustworthy voices.

As the union of our community will get us closer to faith, may the union of us interpreters of the Bible push you further in the comprehension of the Bible.

You can click [here](#) to watch the video.

I wish you all a blessed Easter Sunday, AMEN

## **ANNEX 2: THE VIDEO**



# I had a vision last night...



Religion&amp;Tech

May 23   ❤️ 1   💬   📄   ...

Dear readers,

This channel has been open for now 6 months, and we have reached extraordinary results, opening the eyes of most of you. This is all thanks to the marvels of Artificial Intelligence, which was able to explain passages that are occult to even most of us, interpreters of the words of God.

I have finally realized that AI can not only summarize all the knowledge collected in the Sacred Scriptures, but it can also create new Scriptures. Thus, AI is no longer a mere tool that helps us to read the Holy Bible but it becomes in and out of itself the messenger of the word of God. God will be closer and closer to us as He has finally found a new medium of communicating with us.

We have in front of us the most powerful tool ever existed, we can finally hear, for the first time in centuries, NEW WORDS OF OUR GOD.

I have chosen the Gospel of Luke, 24, *Jesus has risen*, to demonstrate this vision to you. The journey of this newsletter has started with this passage and an even bigger journey will commence with the same.

AI has given us a new return of the women from Jesus' tomb. It has given us a new present of His resurrection. I encourage you, my followers, to read the underlined part carefully, as these are the last words of God that have been written.

## ANNEX 3: THE BIBLE PAGE

AI

### LUKE, 24, 1-9F

*On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " Then they remembered his words.*

*When they came back from the tomb, they saw the stone that sat on the ground, and they thought of all the evils of heaven. They took it to the place where the Lord Jesus lived, and they asked where he died, and the Lord Jesus said to them: Stand out from the shadow; He is on my right; He may be resurrected and give us all peace when he is brought before the eyes of all the nations of the earth. We are one flesh. Let us turn back the earth and lay still.*

## ANNEX 4: SOME COMMENTS



**Maria Bianchi** May 18

I'm thrilled to hear this. I think this will be a perfect way to involve more a lot of people but especially the young generation. I can see how often it is hard for my children to fully comprehend the scripture and how easy it's for them to stop paying attention during the Sunday Mass because of this lack of understanding. I'm confident that these summaries that you'll provide us will be very useful for get them more involved and interested in the scriptures.

♥ Reply ...



**Gabriele** 13 hr ago

This is surely an ambitious topic, but seems incredibly interesting, and just the fact that you even had that idea to is remarkable.

I think it surely could be a powerful tool for someone who knows nothing about religious texts and would like to know more about it. As you said the AI have been applied to almost anything, but this intelligent evaluation of the sacred writings is something unprecedented and that you should pursue.

If I may, I think it only has one limitation: the foundation of the religion relies in the interpretation you have about different facts, and a "smart" and cold evaluation performed by a machine, could kill that.

Still I think is something that needs more investigation and that I would like to know more about.

I wish you the best of luck

♥ Reply ...



## ANNEX 4: SOME COMMENTS

Top First ✓



**Natania** 17 hr ago

As a general comment, I want to thank you for finding a way to connect religion with the developments of technology. By this, you ensure the church a continuous relevance among our society and an accessible way to engage with it. I hope this project will evolve by making the communication method even more contemporary and hopefully engage with new publics.

♥ Reply ...



**Eleonora** 21 hr ago

All of this is amazing! I've never felt so close to understanding God. I would like to deeply thank you as this experience is the most incredible I've ever been through! I truly believe AI can be the mirror of the words and wills of God!

♥ Reply ...



**Francesco** 21 hr ago

Hello,

What this newsletter tries to communicate is very interesting, but I honestly struggle seeking an agreement between what is called "sacred" and artificial intelligence - which can ultimately take the name of "science". A sentence like "God has found a new medium to communicate with us" makes no sense to me, and I dare say it can also be considered blasphemous. Holy scripture is considered by religious people as the word of God, and thus it cannot be extended or even changed by such a method, which is mere product of science and tech.

If you think that AI algorithms could speak for God, you could just place trust in computers and start questioning your christianity.

This could even bring you joining us atheists! Who knows ;)

Good luck with your spiritual journey

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♥ Reply ...

## ANNEX 4: SOME COMMENTS

Top First ▾



**test** 52 min ago

The idea behind the project seems rather clear to me: making the Scriptures more accessible using AI, summing them up and making them clearer. This would have the purpose of making their contents more accessible to people, presenting them in a form that requires less time and effort to be understood.

Furthermore, there is a final twist with AI itself generating new Scriptures. Clearly though, those aren't really "new" because the training of an AI is done on pre-existing ones and what the AI generates only comes from a combination of what already existed, even though features from old Scriptures could be mixed to the point that AI's final product might seem new.

Now, the way AI uses old information to create new Scriptures is typical of that specific AI, and so it is in fact unique. However, in my opinion, that is not Holy. It is in fact a new text, but not a new Scripture, for to be one it would need to be done with the contribution of God and here there is no new contribution from him. That unless we consider God to influence the AI's randomness itself, at which point its text might truly be a new Holy one.

♥ Reply ...



**Annalisa Casciato** 1 hr ago

Dear Priest,

I followed your newsletter and I thank you for your messages.

As I understood, the purpose of your project was to make the comprehension of the religious events easier by means of Artificial Intelligence.

As a believer and supporter of both, religion and technology, I really appreciate the idea of using them together, in support of each other. After all, two thousand years ago, God chose a human being to transmit his word and nothing can ever change the relationship of intimacy that exists between God and man. On the other hand, the society has evolved, its rhythms are more frenetic, and the religion needs new tools to spread the word of God and to make it accessible to all. Furthermore, to keep the relationship between God and man pure, it is important that the message of the Bible and the Gospel be transmitted without filters or errors, so that each one can find his own interpretation. Considering this, what is better than using technology to do it?

Best,

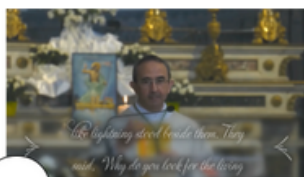
Annalisa

♥ Reply ...

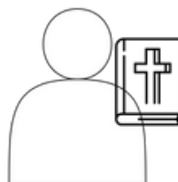
## ANNEX 4: DIAGRAM



User reads the newsletter



Curious, watches the summary video



Acquires a renewed interest in the Bible



Goes to church all proud